TOWN
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HURCH

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Drama in the Rural Church

MARGARET BLAIR JOHNSTONE

• Before entering the rural church field, it was my privilege to serve for ten years as pastor of a Chicago church. One day, while sitting in the parsonage living room, I overheard two small girls in conversation just under the window: "How many we sold?"

Grimy fingers thumbed through the pages of a small chance book. "Nineteen."

"Nineteen? We just have to make it twenty."

"Well, let's try in here," indicating the parsonage where by now I was an interested spectator.

"In there? Don't be a dope!"

"Well, why not?" whereupon the one child confidently started up the steps only to be yanked back by her companion. "What's the matter with you anyway?" my would-be doorbell pusher demanded. . . . "Maybe the lady will take one."

"That's just the trouble . . . if you'll only wait, I'll tell you. You can't sell a chance here. This place is. . . . The lady. . . . Well, if you must know, the lady here ain't no lady. She's a . . . she's a minister."

From that instant on, it became undeniably apparent to me that the major line of attack on any situation is dependent not only upon what it is, but also upon what it is not. So with the subject assigned me: *Drama in the Rural Church.* We all of us have enough horrible recollections of the teetering Tim and tittering Tilly acts of our childhood to make us shun church drama as conscientiously as the typical worshipper shuns the front pew.

In the rural church, furthermore, we have been subject for so long to the ridicule which the "Hiram-Mirandy," "by-cracky" burlesque engenders, that it is small wonder that one of the topflight men in rural church work recently turned over his file on drama to me with the words: "When you are through with it, file it in your waste basket!"

What It Is Not

Good religious drama is not a money raiser; it is not a propaganda device; it is not a prima donna promoter; nor is a drama group a cross between a match-maker's mecca and a lonely hearts' club.

At the outset, it is well for us to establish once and for all not only what religious drama is not, but also what is not religious drama! To borrow Fred Eastman's phrase, "Ninety percent of the plays now classified as religious will not meet the test. Most of them are pious trash."[1]

"Too many have looked upon drama in the church only as a 'new wrinkle' in religious education, a passing fad, something to keep young people occupied, or a happy outlet for the creative energies of the minister's wife. Others have viewed it as a comparatively painless way to inform their congregations concerning the financial needs of the church and its mission boards and similar agencies."[2]

The importance of the propaganda skit, the educational program, the inspirational information presentation I would be the last to disparage. Use the propaganda skit. Play it for all it is worth in your stewardship program, your every member canvass, your annual meetings, your youth program. But let us not confuse fundamentals. Though plotted Biblically, costumed angelically, directed by a saint, and all proceeds heroically designated for some over-and-above mission project, you are *not* producing religious drama.

What, then, is Religious Drama?

"Religious drama is characterized by its emotional and intellectual reaction on the players and audience, making them conscious of being lifted out of their own selves into a relationship with something greater and higher," Harold Ehrensperger tells us.

Patty Hill defines drama as "trying on life to get the feel of it."

Eastman's now classic requirement as to the test of a religious drama

[1] Fred Eastman, *Modern Religious Dramas,* Henry Hold and Company, 1928.
[2] Fred Eastman, *Christ in the Drama,* Macmillan, New York, 1947.

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can be appreciated best by those who have seen it in action: *"What is religious drama? One which has a religious effect upon an audience, that is, sends the audience away exalted in spirit and with a deepened sense of fellowship with God and man."*

Here, of course, we begin to prove the rule with the exception.

We have said that religious drama is not propaganda. Yet I have seen Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" cast the first ray of hope into lives haunted by the seeming waste of untimely death. I have watched Alice Brown's "Joint Owners in Spain," that delightful yet realistic portrayal of life in an old ladies' home, start to transform a cantankerous, meddlesome gossip into a mellow, radiant personality. I have witnessed Goodman's "Dust of the Road" keep a man from the abyss of the betrayal of his own integrity. I know that Zona Gale's "The Neighbors" can change the atmosphere of a countryside.

Drama in One Church

Or consider the story of a hamlet in northern New York. For years, misunderstanding, frustration, bitterness. Two churches, one Methodist, one Congregational serving a countryside population of approximately two hundred. Then the slow beginnings of united effort. Union on the surface, but underneath the old loyalties, the abiding preferences. Church council meetings adjourned if equal representation was not present; rivalry in the church school; careful reminders that more Methodists than Congregationalists had been baptized during the past year; equally conscientious mentioning that more Congregationalists than Methodists had joined the church. And then, the first sign that the effort was not waste, that given time another village might lose its life to find it.

It was the Sunday night before Christmas. The little white church was packed to its candle-lit vestibules. On the platform spotlights picked up the gleam of the chalice held high in the hands of the white-robed angels appearing to King Arthur in Bowie's "Christmas Pageant of the Holy Grail." Not children, but men and women brought the magic scenes to life. The next day, a director of the bank was overheard saying: "Whoever would have thought that we'd ever see that many men in ——— at one time, let alone in the church, and *in a play* at that!"

The most pertinent remark came, however, from a little old lady who observed: "My, wasn't it good. And you know what? I don't think that even one soul counted once to see if the King's Court was mostly Congregational or Methodist!"

Good religious drama is the best thing there is for prima donnas . . . for prima donna communities, prima donna groups, prima donna individuals. It simply makes a prima donna out of everybody. It does it by ignoring names. It concentrates on the worship experience. On the order of worship, the names of the characters appear, but not those of their portrayers. The electrician, the carpenter, the stage-hand, the make-up crew, the poster maker . . . all are prima donnas in their own sphere producing together the miracle: a deepened sense of fellowship with God and man.

We have said that the religious drama group is not a matchmaker's mecca nor a lonely hearts' club. Yet every minister who works with drama has seen unguessed talent uncovered, unknown capacities tapped, unexpected resources revealed in even the simplest sharing of the deep things which good drama automatically provides. Demosthenes with his marbles, Helen Hayes with the lyric grace which never betrays the fact that she was horribly pigeontoed, are as nothing to the miracle in personality transformation any parish minister can witness when he uses religious drama as a definite technique in worship.

Contrary to what the average city dweller surmises as he flits through a tiny village: "What do these people ever do with their time?" is a sadly misplaced query. Rural people and the rural church have every bit as much competition for the time in which to do things as does the city situation. In fact, what Christian today, be he city or rural in habitat, allows himself time enough to come face to face with life's central realities? If choice is "character in action," how do we determine our choices?

In our day, even as in Jesus', men hunger for the vivid, the graphic, the sure. "The good religious drama kindles the imagination, purges the emotions, lifts the spirit, and sheds new light on the human beings around us. The real dramatist puts his central character under the pressure of a crisis, a pressure so great that the character is broken open and we can see his soul and the forces of good and evil waging their battle for it."[3]

The Play's The Thing

Here and there during the past twenty years, alert leaders, Protestant, Catholic, and Mormon have made significant strides in awareness that "The play IS the thing." Increasingly, seminaries, institutes, councils of churches are responding to the unparalleled opportunity good drama offers to "catch the conscience" of man before it is too late. A treasury of good religious drama and the technique for its production is now available. What can the local church do with it:

1. The minister must become aware. He will inform himself.
2. He will organize a reading group. Though no play is ever produced, the possibilities for the use of good religious drama as a basis for discussion in Young Adult, Youth, Women's and Laymen's Fellowships are limitless. What about using drama to revive your Midweek Meeting, to give meaning to your Church Family Night?
3. He will choose the play, learning the tests of good drama, and learning also the tests of group discipline involved in choosing and holding to the best.
4. He will organize for production, availing himself of the now accepted standard procedures as outlined in the better manuals.

Eastman, Fred and Louis Wilson—Drama in the Church. French, New York, 1933. $1.50.
Eastman, Fred—1948 Edition, A

[3] *Ibid.*, page 143.

Selected List of Religious Dramas—Chicago Theological Seminary, 5757 University Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois

Division of Plays and Pageants, The Methodist Church, A Series of Pamphlet materials, 740 Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois

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A Project in Religious Drama

DITOR OF *Town and Country hurch:*

For the last two years the young arried people of our church in a own of about 400 population have onsored a project that has brought lot of fun to themselves, a social ervice to the community, and some ncome to the church.

hree-Act Play

This particular project is the presntation of a regular three-act play. o doubt every church has a number f ex-schoolteachers or high school raduates who had something to do ith high school dramatics. Other roups may be fortunate enough to ave persons who have had this exerience at the college level. Our lay director was the wife of a schoolacher who had no particular training in directing plays, but she was nterested in the project and had a ersonality that helped make the rind of play practice a pleasure. ur cast was just the ordinary run f folk—housewives, grocers, schoolachers, etc., who were willing to do their best."

xperiment

The first play was definitely an exeriment. But it was a good play—ell chosen for public interest, well dapted to the cast available, and ell presented. It was presented at e high school gym in February, uite in advance of spring producons by the high school dramatic ub. Every good seat was taken.

Many who thought it was just another home talent play" or a rogram "by a church group" were nformed by those who saw the play at "it was really good." There was me demand that it be repeated, but the group settled for one showing.

When it came to the selection of a play and cast last year, the group was under community obligation to produce something as good as the year before. It helps to bring out the best when others expect it. They did it again.

Last year they also took the play to another town and presented it there under sponsorship of a church group of that community.

The Production

It is time now to begin looking for plays, so the play will be selected, the cast chosen, and everyone will be ready to go to work shortly after the first of the year. They have allowed from four to six weeks for rehearsals. They practice from one to three times per week. It does take time and interferes with some other engagements but it has been very worth while. Cast members have greatly enjoyed the fellowship at play-practice. The community appreciates such well-prepared entertainment and the church is richer by $400 as a result of the two plays given.

Proceeds from the first play were used to purchase a neon name sign for our church. Proceeds from the second play have been held as a stand-by aid for an eye operation for a girl of the Sunday School or, if not needed there, the group has in mind either carpeting for the sanctuary or a sound-movie projector.

This is written in the hope that some other rural church group may be encouraged to tackle what may seem "the impossible"; that they may enjoy the experience and both the community and their church may profit thereby.

—Rev. C. C. Saunders,
First Presbyterian Church
Fairfield, Wash.

Bookmobile

Lewis P. Watson
Monkmeyer Press, N. Y.

• The man who is worthy of being a leader of men will never complain of the stupidity of his helpers, of the ingratitude of mankind nor the inappreciation of the public. These things are all a part of the great game of life, and to meet them and not go down before them in discouragement and defeat is the final proof of power.

—Elbert Hubbard

Pre-Seminary Studies Recommended

• The American Association of Theological Schools, Lexington, Ky., has issued the following statement on Pre-Theological Seminary Studies:

I. The Function of Pre-Seminary Studies

College courses prior to theological seminary are not ends in themselves, but are means toward the realization of certain ends without which a minister is handicapped. The college work of students looking to the ministry should issue in at least three broad kinds of results. We may expect that these results will tend to be realized through certain kinds of college work. We state the kinds of results, together with the types of courses and other experiences which should tend to produce such results.

1. The college work of a pre-seminary student should result in the ability to use certain tools of the educated man:

(a) The ability to write and speak English clearly and correctly. English composition should have this as a specific purpose, but this purpose should also be cultivated in all written work.

(b) The ability to think clearly. In some persons this ability is cultivated through courses in philosophy or specifically in logic. In others it is cultivated by the use of scientific method, or by dealing with critical problems in connection with literary and historical documents.

(c) The ability to read at least one foreign language, and in some circumstances more than one.

2. The college work of a pre-seminary student should result in acquaintance with the world in which he lives:

(a) The world of men and ideas. This is aided by familiarity with English literature, philosophy, and psychology.

(b) The world of nature. This is aided by familiarity with the natural sciences, including actual laboratory work.

(c) The world of human affairs. This is aided by familiarity with history and the social sciences.

II. Subjects in Pre-Seminary Study

The following is regarded by the Association as a minimum list of fields of study with which it is desirable that a student should have acquaintance before beginning study in seminary. These fields of study are selected because of the probability that they will lead in the direction of such results as have been indicated.

It is desirable that the student's work in these fields of study should be evaluated on the basis of his mastery of these fields, rather than in terms of semester hours or credits.

But many institutions use the latter methods of calculation. Therefore, in connection with the fields, we indicate what seems to us the minimum for each, putting the minimum in terms of semesters and semester hours.

It is suggested that a student should acquire a total of 90 semester hours or complete approximately three-fourths of his college work in the areas listed below.

Basal Fields	*Semesters*	*Semester Hours*
English	6	12-16
Literature, Composition and Speech		
Philosophy	3	6-12
At least two of the following:		
Introduction to philosophy		
History of philosophy		
Ethics		
Logic		
Bible or Religion	2	4- 6
History	3	6-12
Psychology	1	2- 3
A foreign language	4	12-16
At least one of the following:		
Latin		
Greek		
Hebrew		
French		
German		
Natural sciences	2	4- 6
Physical or biological		
Social sciences	2	4- 6
At least two of the following:		
Economics		
Sociology		
Government or political science		
Social psychology		
Education		

Concentration

Concentration of work, or "majoring," is a common practice in colleges. For such concentration or major, a constructive sequence based upon any one, two, or three of the above fields of study would lead up naturally to a theological course.

Of the various possible areas of concentration, where areas of concentration are required, a major in English, philosophy, or history is regarded to be the most desirable.

National Laymen's Association

• The National Laymen's Evangelistic Association has held its 28th annual convention at Toccoa, Ga. This association is composed of laymen and ministers of all denominations. These members are located in every state in the U. S.—from coast-to-coast and border-to-border. At the convention this year, pastors were given full membership recognition instead of associate membership, as was previously the case.

Mr. Albert C. Feigert, of Van Wert, Ohio, was elected national president. Mr. Feigert—a Baptist—succeeds Vernon W. Patterson—a prominent Presbyterian from Charlotte, N. C. With this change in office, the National Headquarters will be moved from Charlotte to Van Wert.

The work of the association consists of personal evangelism and the promotion of union evangelistic campaigns. Great emphasis has been placed on the last of these two phases of evangelism during the last year, and intensive promotion of future evangelistic campaigns is being planned for 1948-1949.

The slogan under which this nation-wide Christian organization is launching an expanded program is, "More of All Churches Presenting Christ to All Men."

Further information may be obtained by writing to the National Headquarters—National Laymen's Evangelistic Association, Inc., 302 Pollock Building, Van Wert, Ohio.

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The Challenge of Rural America to a United Evangelistic Advance

EDWIN L. BECKER

• Probably a minimum of 20,000 rural Protestant churches have closed their doors in twenty-five years. The Disciples of Christ alone have nearly twenty per cent fewer rural churches than they had twenty-five years ago.

But underlying these statistics are certain deeper truths which are not so quickly apparent. While thousands were dying, scores of thousands hung on and are still hanging on. The rural neighborhood, though changing and often weakening, is not gone yet by a long way and in certain sections of the country shows definite signs of health and vitality. Churches which have had deep historic roots in a community and have contributed to its character and stability cannot die even a natural death without bringing hardship to the spirit and religious life of the community. Leaders in rural school reform today are recognizing this same fact and are much slower to close one-room and small rural schools by proclamation. Neighborhood churches, like neighborhood schools, can only be closed with justification when careful planning is done so that the values those institutions once stood for are preserved and their functions are taken over by reorganized or expanded parishes.

The Town Churches

Which brings me to a second fallacy in our early thinking about the inevitable death or consolidation of rural churches. It is best stated in the terms of Dr. H. Paul Douglas who years ago discovered that the killing range of the town church was much greater than its service range. In other words the village and town churches which have taken leadership from the country churches have never, in return, assumed any responsibility for the people who were left when the country churches died. This, even though their death came largely because their leadership had gone to the town church. The town preacher looks after his own flock but his pastoral work too often ends at the town limits.

Rural Non-Farm Group

It has, furthermore, become apparent in recent years that the fastest growing group in America is the rural non-farm population. It is growing twice as fast as any other segment of the population and has increased by seven million in ten years. These are the people moving away from city centers. They are often commuters. But they are moving into the responsibility-area of rural churches.

They can greatly strengthen rural churches where the church is alert and adaptive to its changing environment. This group needs the church to help create a new sense of community where the new families live. An aggressive church program is needed to save this rapidly growing population from the sterility of non-participation in neighborhood and community life.

All of this has been said to indicate there is no need for a mood of hopelessness when we confront Protestantism's condition in rural areas. We need not sit by in dumb resignation while natural and social forces seem to be dooming the rural church as we once knew it. Rather, there is need for realism based on more complete knowledge.

And this greater knowledge shows those trends which seek to strengthen the church or which, if used by the church, can greatly increase its effectiveness. As Protestantism faces its evangelistic task in rural America it is not looking at dead bones. It is rather confronted by a dynamic and changing society.

As Protestants, considering together a united evangelistic advance in America, certain facts about the

rural areas of this land particularly challenge us.

Greatest Potential

In the first place, rural America still represents Protestantism's greatest potential. Its population is by and large either Protestant or pagan. It still represents forty per cent of our total population and probably forty per cent of the membership of our churches are rural dwellers. Probably more church members are still engaged in agriculture than in any other one trade or industry.

And about fifty per cent of America's children still go to rural schools. Rural America remains the birthplace of our population and also the dominant source of our moral strength and character. While for every ten city adults there are seven children, in the small town for every ten adults there are twelve children, and on the farm for every ten adults there are fourteen children. There is no doubt that any church which loses its rural roots is within a few generations of extinction.

The Roman Catholic plan for 200 years published by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference[1] has three points, all of which relate to rural areas: first, get Catholics established on farms; second, get city Catholics to move to acreages; and third, convert the unconverted on the land.

Inadequately Churched

A second factor challenging us is that today rural America is poorly churched. In terms of institutions it is actually overchurched; but by any measure it is inadequately churched. The average membership of rural Protestant churches is just under one hundred. As nearly as we can tell, there is one rural church for every 400 people in rural areas. Scattered studies would indicate that in spite of what would seem to be adequate churching, for every churched adult in rural America there are two not churched.

This means too that we do not have an effective evangelistic program in rural areas. This lack of program is true at every level. Local rural churches are not nearly as evangelistic as they think they are. Just because most of them have an evangelistic meeting every year does not mean they are winning people to Christ. In any one year we can expect that 1600 of the rural churches of the Disciples of Christ will report not a single baptism.

Some time ago we met with a group of people in Hancock County, Illinois, where a social and religious study has recently been completed by the Committee on Cooperative Field Research. There are sixty-eight churches in the county, making one church for every 346 people. In spite of what would seem to be an adequate number of churches, there is still one adult outside of the church for every adult in a church and in the last twenty-five years the church membership in the county has shown a decrease.

A Protestant Challenge

Finally, it must be said that this evangelistic challenge in rural America is a Protestant challenge. Through the grace of God and the pluck and devotion of our ancestors, Protestantism got to rural America first. A high percentage of the rural churches in America are Protestant. There must be at least 150,000 of them altogether.

Recently the National Catholic Rural Life Conference published a booklet called, "A Survey of Catholic Weakness." Among other things, this book points out that only eight per cent of the rural churches in America are Catholic. Only in New Mexico do they predominate. The states of Georgia and Tennessee, on the other hand, are better than 99 and 44/100 per cent "pure" Protestant. If rural America is won to Christ, the Protestant forces will have to carry the load practically alone.

The influences of materialism and paganism are just appearing in strength and viciousness. Here, there is yet time to build the Christian society. The city church is an island in the midst of a swirling, disintegrating, secular and materialistic society. In many of the largest of these churches their own spiritual glow is greatly dimmed as it reaches to the periphery of their own vast membership and their prophetic voice is drowned by the noise of their own organizational machinery. The city church wages at best a holding battle against a pagan world.

The rural church, on the other hand, is still a leaven. It is in the midst of a society where the forces of secularism are not so far advanced. It lives in an environment and has traditions that make it possible yet to create Christian life and Christian culture. The rural church is needed as never before in strength and power to conserve and create those values essential to an enduring Christian society. And that is the job of Protestantism. It is God's challenge. He has given us the field and the resources. Those who are Protestant leaders must choose to accept that challenge. The evangelization of rural America is our job, it calls for our planning and our hardest work.

(A Paper Read Before the Committee on a United Evangelistic Advance.)

Christian Service Training Center

• A Christian Service Training Center is being developed at Babson Park, Florida. It will carry on a two-fold program:

1. Train leaders to help needy people lift their level of living to a point where they will live in Christian fellowship.

2. Provide training and experience in building low-cost home units, developing land and local resources, creating rural industries and farm utilities.

Field work is arranged in rural communities of the south-eastern states. The Center is described as international and interdenominational.

[1] *A Survey of Catholic Weakness,* National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, Iowa.

An Indiana County Holds a Rural Church Institute

OAKEL F. HALL

A promising type of "grass roots" "home ground" rural church con-ence has been held at the Hope-ll Presbyterian Church in John-n County, Indiana. It was spon-red by the county ministerial as-ciation and promoted as a "rural urch institute" with emphasis on e fact-finding method of approach. In preparation for the day's pro-am a few volunteer ministers un-r the leadership of Rev. T. B. mes, pastor of the Hopewell urch, and ably assisted by S. B. ott, the county agent, and other mpetent laymen, made a survey of e county's churches in their rela-on to agriculture and rural life. is survey disclosed facts and con-tions which brought challenge as ll as surprise to the ministers and terested laymen.

ndings Presented

These findings were processed and esented in type and graphs. Among e more interesting data presented ere those relative to the rural-ban population make-up, the anging number and size of farms, e proportion of owners and ten-ts, the increasing number of rural on-farm families, the decreasing tio of children and youth to adults, e growing influence of urban cen-rs, and the gradual weakening of e influence of the rural churches. Armed with these timely and chal-nging data the local leaders anned a program for a day's in-tute designed to give concrete lp and encouragement to the sev-al rural churches involved. Spe-al stress was placed on the chal-nge to the churches, more par-cularly to the unused opportuni-s to serve farm families and inter-mmunity needs. It was made sun-ear that despite notable success re and there the total job remains tantalizing challenge.

fluence of Speakers

The two visiting speakers of wide fluence were H. S. Randolph of the Presbyterian Board of National Missions and E. L. Becker of the Disciples of Christ Missionary Society. Each of these men made a distinctive contribution by showing that many of the problems and conditions confronting Johnson County rural church leaders are and have been for a decade or longer the concern of other rural areas, that the rural people of Johnson County, Indiana, are not "a peculiar people."

Family Farm Values

Dr. Randolph stressed the basic values of farm family life. His definition of the farm family is in three parts: First, a family living on a farm; secondly, a family deriving its livelihood from the farm; thirdly, a family doing all the work of the farm except in times of peak demands, like harvesting, ditching, repairing and reconstruction.

He refuted the oft-repeated statement that modern methods of farming and modern ways of farm life have removed the opportunity to develop the old family virtues and to prepare youth for effective living in country or city. It may be more difficult to do this now, but the farm family still has the lead in occupational training, in creativeness, in democracy, in cooperative endeavor within the family unit, and in cultivating the presence and power of God.

Supreme Objectives

These supreme objectives, however, call for an effective church and the ceaseless application of the Christian way of life. The rural church must also teach in season and out of season that "farmers are the keepers of God's Holy Earth," that today's care of the soil and other natural resources may determine whether tomorrow's children will or will not be adequately fed.

Mr. Becker reviewed interestingly the rural church movement from the report of the Theodore Roosevelt Country Life Commission to the most recent state and national rural church conferences. He pointed out the tendency to over-church in some sections and under-church in others, and stated that on basis of census returns one virile church to every 1000 population would be better than one to 350, the ratio in most of our rural communities. Fewer than one-third of present-day rural churches have resident ministers, and a majority of these pastors are without adequate training or the ability to promote satisfactorily the church's cause in needy areas. The church has an incalculable stake in the land and those who till it.

Facts on Church Life

The host pastor, Rev. T. B. James, whose initiative and leadership seem to have made possible both the county survey and the institute, reported by words and graphs the essential data of the survey. In Johnson County there are now 47 churches, 34 of which are in the open country or villages. Ten per cent of these churches were organized before the Civil War, and in all people closely related to agriculture have outnumbered persons with no interest in agriculture.

Twelve open-country churches have been abandoned during the past thirty years. Farm owners have consistently shown much greater interest in the churches than tenants. Mobility has operated against church attendance as well as church membership. The sizable increase of rural non-farm families within the past ten years has added next to no real strength to the rural churches.

Membership and Attendance

For the 47 churches in Johnson County there are now 25 resident pastors, thirteen of whom are in the three small urban centers, Franklin, Greenwood and Edinburgh, leaving twelve for 34 rural churches. Of the non-resident ministers, eight are students and four are older men

whose week-day time is employed "earning a living." Fewer than half the total population manifest any real church interest by attending or contributing to any church.

The average weekly attendance at all the churches is less than half the number related by membership. Among the reasons given for not going to church were: lack of interest, Sunday work, and "not in the habit of going to church." A slightly different explanation was given for the failure of the rural non-farm families to become identified with the county's rural churches. Unbroken urban connections, absence of a kindred feeling toward rural farm neighbors, and the slowness of rural ministers and other rural church leaders to make needed adjustments were cited as the more prevalent causes of disinterestedness on the part of this growing number of non-farm rural families.

Owners and Tenants

The county agricultural agent, S. B. Scott, who will soon complete his eighteenth year in that office, presented mimeographed sheets to set forth pertinent facts concerning the change in rural-urban population, the change in farm practices, the number and size of farms, the proportion of farm owners and farm tenants, some socio-economic effects of absentee ownership and long-time tenancy, and other data of indirect importance to rural church leaders. He was followed by a farm owner, Mr. Randolph Core, who told of some excellent instances of good relationships between owners and tenants. At this point the assistant county agricultural agent, W. R. Pope, a recent graduate of Purdue University's School of Agriculture, exhibited and explained samples of farm lease contracts which have proved mutually satisfactory, and which may be had by writing to Purdue.

Roots and Fruits

Needless to point out that the half hundred or more rural pastors and a larger number of rural lay leaders saw in all these references to current workaday problems new and tempting opportunities for the application of Christianity which was said by one speaker to have its "roots in mysticism, but its fruits in practicalism."

The last but not the least important of the day's heavy program was a panel discussion in which four young people of the county gave expression to their beliefs, their disappointments, their desires and their hopes. Not one pessimistic note was struck, and some definitive suggestions were submitted for making family life on the farm more attractive and more rewarding.

Ecumenical Spirit

The Institute closed following the adoption of some customary resolutions of appreciation and commendation and urgent recommendation that a similar institute be held a year hence. The recommendations included also the suggestion that the fine ecumenical spirit which pervaded the very atmosphere at Hopewell be conserved and cultivated by efforts to unite the several church groups in other timely and challenging objectives. It was also recommended that additional time and effort be spent in surveying other areas of Johnson County conditions and possibilities with the view of making it one of the best surveyed counties in Indiana from the vantage ground of the rural church and rural family life. Should this be done, it goes without saying that the Hopewell Institute will provide "copy" for other Hoosier counties.

American Country Life Association

• Announcement is made that the officers of the American Country Life Association are Roger B. Corbett, President; and Paul V. Maris, Executive Secretary. The headquarters office is at 3166 North 18th Street, Arlington, Virginia.

A report of the 1948 meeting held at Berea, Ky., is being prepared for members. Thomas Alfred Tripp of the Congregational Christian Churches, a member of the Committee on Town and Country, is on the Executive Committee of A.C.L.A.

Interneship In Rural Parishes

• The program of interneship in rural parishes and agricultural studies at Cornell which has been carried on for theological students for the past two years will be continued in 1949, according to an announcement made by the Rev. Ralph L. Williamson of Ithaca, N. Y. Mr. Williamson is Director of Rural Church Work for the Rural Church Institute, with headquarters in Barnes Hall on the Cornell University campus.

Fourteen students were enrolled last summer. They worked in rural churches from June 1st to Sept. 6th with time taken out for six weeks of study in the Cornell Summer Session. They preached, worked with youth and children, made surveys, drove tractors, harvested hay and grain and learned many other church and farm skills. They studied family life relationships under Dr. Edward V. Pope and agricultural economics under Dr. C. A. Bratton, both of the Cornell staff.

Dr. Bratton took them on field trips to study land use and conservation, soil types, cooperatives, also to the Ralph Space dairy farm and the Dryden Springs Poultry Farm at Dryden, to the bean fields near Homer, and the canning plant and migrant labor camp of the David Harum Canning Plant at Homer.

Mr. Williamson supervised the church work of the students with the assistance of fifteen pastors. He also conducted field trips and a weekly seminar on rural church problems. Visits were made to remodelled churches at Jacksonville, Reading Center, and Odessa; also to Ithaca cooperatives including the Co-op Food Store, Mother Zero freezer locker, the local GLF feed and farm supplies store, and the GLF headquarters on Terrace Hill.

Among the rural leaders who addressed the students were Dr. C. M. McConnell, Professor of Rural Church Methods at Boston University School of Theology; Dr. Liberty Hyde Bailey of Ithaca; and Professors Howard Tyler and T. N. Hurd of Cornell.

The fourteen students represented seven seminaries from St. Louis to Boston and came from Korea, India,

nd Jamaica in addition to the nited States. Their practice fields ere churches in the Ithaca region nd also the Methodist parishes at ddison, N. Y., and Springville, Pa., nd the Protestant Episcopal parish Montrose, Pa.

Henry Oh of Korea, who refused n invitation to be private secretary o President Syngham Rhee in order o study rural church work in Amerca, was a member of the class. The roject is sponsored jointly by the ural Church Institute and the Auurn Theological Seminary. Mr. Veir Stewart, a manufacturer in uburn, N. Y., is the president of he Seminary's Board of Directors.

Protestants and Catholics Shared Building

The following is a statement reeived concerning the Community Church, Keystone, Nebraska:

"When built in 1908 by the civic minded citizens of this ranch community, the little chapel was deigned for both Protestant and Cathlic services. An altar was built at ne end and a pulpit at the other, vith the benches constructed so that he backs would turn over (as in old ailroad coaches) and the worshipers could face either way.

"For many years Presbyterian and Catholic faiths shared the building, although now a Presbyterian church has been built and Catholic services are held in a nearby town. A Luthern body is at present using the building, still the property of the community."

Agricultural Sabbath

• The Synagogue Council of America, representing Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism, designated Saturday, October 23, as Agricultural Sabbath. As in previous years, this observance is linked with he Jewish Sabbath during the celeration of Sukkoth, which is the traditional Hebrew Feast of Thanksgiving.

Voltaire Built it for God

WILLIAM L. BAILEY

• In his little book "Through Nature to God," John Fiske tells a strange story about the country church that Voltaire built on his estate near Geneva.

It is odd to find this man symbolizing by this act the saner vision of his later years. It still stands near Geneva, on the well-known estate of Ferney, where he "retired" to end his eventful career as a country gentleman.

The Site

This man seldom did things without thought. This estate he chose because of the "view" it commanded. There is none finer in Europe. Voltaire was not one to give a pious reason for so doing. But we remember that the Master often called on those who would learn His spirit to "lift up their eyes and look" on the heavens, on the panorama of the open country. This man had large things in mind as he built his country home and a new country church. For over the door of this church he set the motto—*"Deo Erexit Voltaire."*

There had been an ill-located parish church there. Many a country church is so. And those who locate country churches—as well as country homes—seem not to consider the view worth saving. Voltaire took down the old church, placed it where it did not obstruct the view from the house, turned it toward the prospect of the valley. A gruesome cross in the churchyard he took down and replaced with a beautiful one inside the church. For all this he obtained permission of the highest church authorities, and had their sanction for the reasons he gave.

The Motto

But why the motto?

Nowhere in France, he said, had he seen a church built "for God" but always only to some of his servants —Saint This or That. And as a man —as Voltaire—he wished to do Him honor. This is the spirit of Protestantism.

As to the prospect over God's creation where this church looks, Fiske says, "at its feet the lake gleamed and sparkled; and beyond the waves, and the gorgeous luxuriance of perfect gardens, could be seen, in dazzling contrast, the eternal snows on Mont Blanc."

It was not far from here where Ruskin tells us that he came to a

new sense of the meaning of the Transfiguration.

The location of country church and country home may be an asset to the spirit of worship in country life.

—Reprinted from *Home Lands*

"Doctors and Horses"

The Illinois State Medical Society Committee on Rural Medical Service has published a pamphlet under the title above, dealing with the "Health Care of the Farm Family."

The country doctor is in one respect like the horse, he is said to be fast disappearing from American farm communities. Yet the doctor's place must be kept filled.

It costs about $8,000 to $10,000 to secure a medical education. For a young man to make this investment and plan to practice in rural communities "takes courage and determination, a will to serve your fellow man and your community."

The practice of medicine is difficult. "Only the brightest, strongest and best—mentally, morally and physically—can win through, and that, in itself, is a distinction."

There should be one physician for about 1,000 people. There is also need for more hospitals.

The Illinois Agricultural Association and the Illinois State Medical Society have established a joint student loan fund, to which each organization will contribute $50,000 over the next ten years, to be loaned to medical students under certain conditions.

Young men accepting loans must agree to go into general medical practice in a town of less than 5,000 population, in his home county, at least as long as it takes him to repay the loan at interest of two per cent.

To be eligible for a loan one must be "of rural origin." Rural communities cannot depend on city boys for their medical care.

Dr. Harlan English, Danville, Ill., is chairman of the Committee on Rural Medical Service, of the Illinois State Medical Society.

Observations of Cooperatives and Churches

• *The following is from a statement of "observations" written by James D. Wyker, a minister who four years ago became a layman serving a county organization of the Ohio Farm Bureau. Jim Wyker is now Ohio director of the Christian Rural Overseas Program.*

It is my opinion that Americans are suffering from the oligarchy of public education, denominational overlords, business barons, medical "closed shop" and politicians, simply because we are not organized to be masters of our own destiny. Our society is too largely taken over by managers because we, the people, have neglected our social responsibility. We have wanted the government to do it.

Our managers have become our masters and our youth are being regimented by Congress, newspapers, schools, and monopoly business. Our freedom is limited and fascist trends over-shadow us, not because they clamor for control, but because we, the people, do not care. If the church, the school, the government CARED, they would go back to the people for consensus of opinion and a verdict on policies. But management, even in co-ops, is seldom concerned about, and often resents, the intrusion of democratic decisions. Some managers consider a board of directors to be a nuisance rather than an avenue to and from the patrons.

I could illustrate the effectiveness of small group controls over tyranny in many ways. I have seen small groups change the minds of merchants about fast time; vote a community dry; build a co-op locker; conduct cancer education; tackle the telephone utility, and change a Board of Education.

If we are to live in a complex interdependent society, it is imperative for us to establish small group controls and consumer ownership of the facilities whereby our destinies are being shaped. We need only one neighborhood group for all of our organized interests rather than a study group for each interest. The latter would be too cumbersome, and it would be very impractical, for life is lived in unity and not in isolated compartments. This leads me to say that the adult Sunday School class will probably continue to decline unless it ceases to be an isolated interest and becomes a religious drive for community and public advancement. How does this evaluation strike you?

Co-ops From Inside

One of my reasons for taking this job was to learn about co-ops from the inside. I wanted to know the problems, the policies, the services, the personnel and the organization of farmers' cooperatives. I knew the literature and the social philosophy of cooperation previously. The picture from within looks about the same as it does from without.

Co-ops, like churches, have leaders with mixed motives. Sometimes this weakness is just the old human equation and sometimes it is due to the leader having his nose too close to the grindstone. While co-op managers might like to spend their time on social salvation, they must spend time keeping books in the black. There are no voluntary contributions to pay co-op salaries. Profit corporations would use the money which supports my job for dividends to stockholders, but a co-op invests this money in education and organization for mutual aid and community advancement.

Co-op boards as well as co-op employees usually have a dim conception of their public service function, but they are committed to ideals of cooperation and service rather than exploitation and competition.

Concerning Motivation

Having defended the personnel of cooperatives, let me now suggest some possible improvement in motivation of both employees and patrons. Co-ops have been going well for only twenty-five years in Ohio.

few were started earlier. The sec-
d generation of co-operators is
t coming on. We are still so close
the old mercenary motives of pri-
te profit that we overstress the
tronage dividend as the major in-
ntive for patronizing co-ops.

The patronage dividend is entire-
just and equitable as an ethical
inciple. It renders unto Caesar the
ings that are Caesar's instead of
nding this money over to some
rson who never earned it.

However, there are other major
centives for patronizing co-ops
hich should be amplified in study
oups, in literature and over the
dio. One of these incentives is the
vnership of the business by its pa-
ons instead of by speculators. Our
aders should dwell on the fact that
patron-owned business will not
ut down every time the profit tide
rns or a labor argument arises, for
exists to serve the people.

Another major incentive is the
stribution of purchasing power to
e masses and the obstruction of
onopolies. The ramifications of
is incentive extend to the eco-
mic foundations of good com-
unity life. It provides money for
vnership of family sized farms, for
pporting country churches and
ral health agencies.

Every co-op employee, especially
anagers, should be well schooled
incentives for cooperation so that
ey can enjoy superior motives
emselves and impart the same to
l co-op patrons. I am persuaded
at we could use these superior
centives like hormones, to speed
p the growth and enrich the qual-
y of the cooperative movement
verywhere. If the leaders of all the
ooperatives in this county, for ex-
mple, would concentrate on these
me incentives, the public would
e so cooperative conscious that self-
h business and political antagonists
ould hang themselves when they
ondemn co-ops.

hurches Fiddle

The church is "fiddling while
ome burns." The communities in
is county, as defined by central-
ed schools, have from two to ten
urches, each one dividing the people into sectarian rivalries for the purpose of promoting its own existence and that of its denomination. In the meantime, powerful secular forces have increased farm tenantry, curtailed the worth of local school curriculums and exploited soil resources.

Farm agencies in the county are elevating these problems so that people can see them clearly, and they are aiding the people to meet these problems, but the churches, with the exception of a half-dozen rural ministers, have not even shown any awareness that such problems exist.

We recall that old story in which a priest and a levite passed by on the other side. We assume that, in their own judgment, their institutional engagements were more important than the problem of a man who was waylaid.

During the past five years we have conducted two questionnaires on ideas such as, "Should the country church concern itself with soil conservation, rural health, vocational agriculture and tenantry?" The overwhelming reply of council members (mostly church people) has been in the affirmative. How much longer will farm people tolerate church leaders who are more concerned about creeds, traditions, formulas and sects than they are in the everyday issues with which the laity must live?

Advisory councils and cooperatives offer ministers a wonderful platform upon which to build spiritual values within the homes and the community and, more particularly, within the social and economic framework around which their laymen must get a livelihood.

We are perturbed by the small number of country people who are challenged by the church. May I make two suggestions out of my experience first as a minister and now as a layman? First, let the minister and the church dig up the problems in the community and help the people find the answers. Such action will abolish self-centeredness (sectarianism) and produce a dynamic spirit of Christian unity which will be like a magnet in the lives of the people, drawing them into the church. Second, let the church leaders learn the Christian worth of cooperatives and spread the message as an answer to local community problems. Such action will establish the supremacy of religion in the lives of many secular-minded people. People will cooperate with a church that practices cooperation.

Minimum Salary Raised

• The New York Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. recently raised the minimum salary scale for its ministers from $2,000 a year to $2,200. In addition, housing is "normally" furnished by the local church or special rent allowances are paid.

A church unable to pay the minimum salary is permitted to apply to a synodical fund for the maintenance of the pastorate for a special grant to make up the difference between the payment the local people can make and the new minimum.

Local churches are requested to make payments of three per cent of all ministerial salaries paid in excess of $1,500 a year.

An official of the synod states, however, that of 520 churches which should make payments into the fund, only 220 did so last year.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

The Church and Economic Life

• "The Church and Economic Life—Basic Christian Principles and Assumptions" is the title of a recent statement adopted by the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches.

The statement is in four parts, as follows: "Fundamental Religious and Ethical Assumptions," "Specific Ethical Principles for the Economic Order," "The Church and Modern Social Movements," "The Contribution of the Church."

One portion reads:

"There has been less organized support on the part of the church for the social and economic institutions that serve the welfare of farm people; this one-sided emphasis on urban as against rural problems needs to be corrected. Agriculture carries a heavy burden growing out of the way a modern economy develops. Many farm people find it necessary to leave agriculture. In many areas they become stranded and sink to low standards of living.

"Farm people increasingly are the principal seedbed of our future population. Though agricultural production, taken as a whole, is not sensitive to the wide fluctuations in business and employment, the income that farm people receive is highly sensitive to the fluctuations in employment in the industrial-urban sector of the economy. Conditions that bear upon stability of tenure are far from satisfactory, and the family farm is burdened by many of the existing policies and institutions. The church should be concerned about these problems, and the ways and means of their solution."

Farmers' Cooperatives

• There were 10,125 farmers' cooperatives engaged in marketing and purchasing in the 1946-47 marketing season and the total volume of business amounted to the sum of $7,116,000,000 according to the annual survey made by the Farm Credit Administration, Cooperative Research and Service Division, Washington 25, D. C.

Church Life in a California Town

ADA L. FORSTER

• A new experience to the writer, whose ministry of over forty years had been in cities, chiefly Minneapolis and Milwaukee, is the leadership of a church in Fortuna, a town of the northern California redwood area. In 1945 the impression one had was that the town had little hope of growth, consisting as it did of retired ranchers, small business firms and older people. Today, with the return of veterans, the coming of new lumber mills, increased tourist trade and auto courts, the town promises to double its population in a short time. In one trailer court which we visited recently there were thirty-one resident families, all of them with work in or near the town, and expecting to remain.

People Care About Churches

The first fact we faced here was that few people seemed to care about church life. Of the six churches, only two were in any way working together—the Methodist and Christian (Disciples of Christ). Other churches were Seventh Day Adventist, Assemblies of God, Christian Science and Roman Catholic. Recently the Church of the Nazarene has been organized. To one accustomed to councils of churches, the first question was of some sort of link-up among the churches that would appeal to the lay mind.

Already started by two far-visioned ministers was the use of released time, allowed by law, for public school pupils to receive weekday religious instruction. The interfaith committee was, and still is, our best avenue of approach to the town in united Christian effort. The Methodist, Christian and Catholic churches have strengthened this cooperative movement by having "Christian Education Week," and giving townspeople a chance to help in the budget. There is a long way to go, but we are sure of the value of this work. Schools are growing. We are now using the Catholic, Methodist and Christian churches. The latter two churches support two qualified teachers and have pupils of six grades for instruction each week.

Union Services

Four of the churches have united for Thanksgiving and Easter services. There probably will be five now. The World Day of Prayer is observed by three churches. This also can grow. An approach to the women of the churches, with the suggestion of having a women's Christian council, is now being considered.

The writer feels that short pastorates of two or three years may be in some measure responsible for the weakness of the churches here. Good town ministers, staying long enough and working together, is the answer to the church's influence here. Unity does not seem possible, but united effort in town matters is.

Many small town churches have a loveliness all their own. There are some good buildings here. The best appointed are those of the two churches which work closest together. The Christian church has the greatest redwood painting in Humboldt County. It was done as a memorial in 1929 by Dr. Martella Lane, a noted painter of redwoods. Like many discouraged churches, the building was allowed to run down. Since 1945 the people of the church have put $3,500 into renovation of the church property and have bought a parsonage for the minister.

Church pride has attracted attention of the people of the town. Leadership, in this way, means much to town churches. Most churches here have beautified their buildings of late. One starts, others follow. It is all a matter of leadership staying long enough to see something through. Many an experienced city minister, spending a few years in a town or country church, could feel glad of being able to bring in some new methods.

Budgets Could be Expanded

It is the opinion of the writer that small town and country churches are able to raise much larger budgets

n they do. To this they should challenged. In a day when town l country leadership is being es- ially trained, all concerned— h local ministers and the head- arters to which the churches be- g—should give the best of train- in Christian stewardship. The urch we serve has spent $11,500 in ee years for renovation of prop- y and the purchase of a manse. t of this must be paid to a na- nal board month by month. The urch is the better for such a pro- m.

In summing up, we say that where urches in town and country can- t unite they should each put on broad a program as possible. They ould then choose at least one im- rtant project, more than one if ssible, that they can do in a united y for the town or community. inisters should be as fraternal as ey can be and let the town know at they respect each other and re- ice in the success of the Kingdom God. Three of our churches— atholic, Christian and Methodist have served for over sixty years. he most significant cooperative ac- vity of the last five years has been eekday religious education.

Herb Revival

Garden literature discloses a re- val of interest in the savory herbs. Iany herbs are also still grown for edicinal purposes. And certain erbs have been associated with spir- ual experience.

Rue, for example, is the herb of race. Why it was so named is not nown. But it was once used in the orm of brushes for the sprinkling f the holy water in the Roman atholic churches of Europe, and it supposed that it thus came to be nown as the herb of repentance and he herb of grace. Rue is also very itter, and it was thought that the bitter" of repentance must precede he receipt of grace.

Borage is the herb of courage. "I, orage, bring always courage," reads n old saying. It is a culinary herb vith an attractive blue flower. Its flavor is close to that of cucumber, and it is coming to be a salad herb. Some writers also say that thyme is the herb of courage.

Shakespeare wrote both of rue, herb of grace, and rosemary, herb of remembrance, linking them together in a line found in *The Winter's Tale*. He said they both keep savor all winter long. Rosemary was often used in Christmas decorations. It is also called the herb of friendship. It has been used in churches instead of incense, because it costs less. Rosemary has often been placed in brides' bouquets.

In India, basil is a sacred plant and is cherished in every Hindu home.

Fennell was credited with making people "brave and strong."

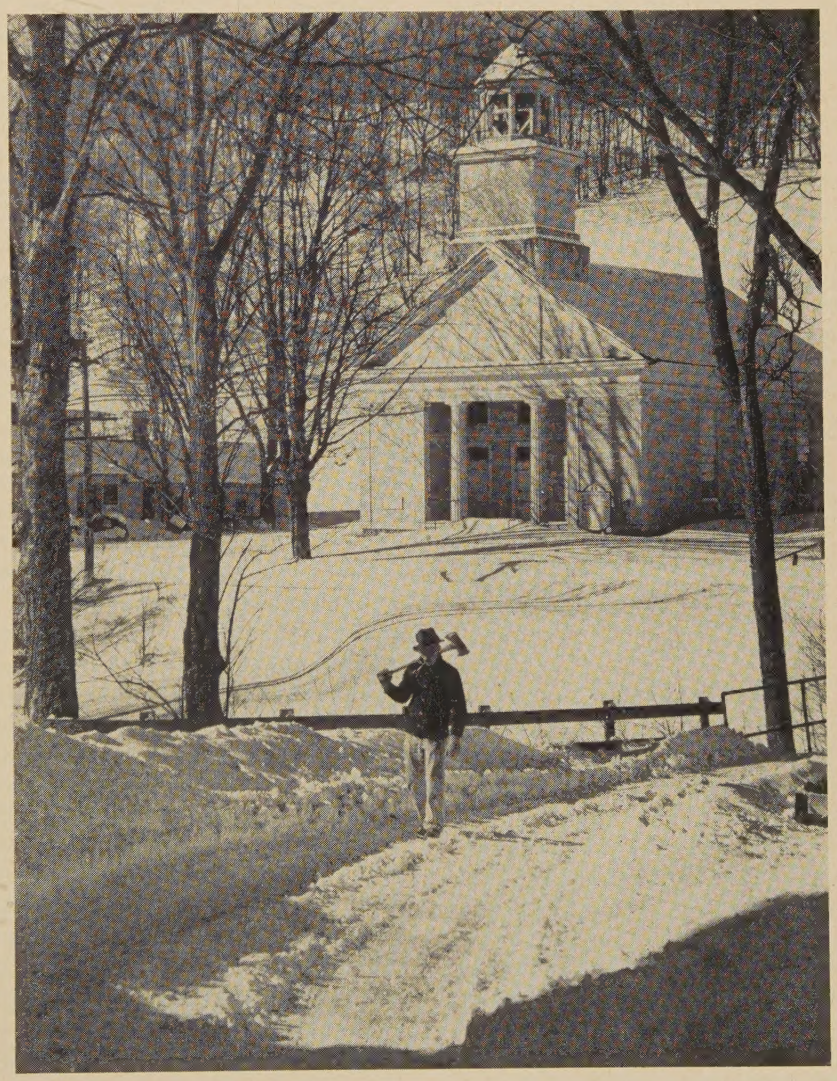
Balm is called the herb of sympathy.

An old herb bears the name of honesty. It is often grown for its flowers in the United States.

It is recorded that St. Helen used the herb of horseheal in treating the sick.

Near the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is an old herb garden which originally supplied herbs for the oldest drug store in America. The garden was started in 1747.

It is generally believed that the earliest herb gardens of Europe were those planted by the Benedictines at their famous monastery, Mount Cassino, Italy. Many monasteries maintained extensive herb gardens.



Church at South Woodstock, Vt.

Gustav Anderson
A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.

A Prayer at the Dedication of a Mobile Unit for Migrant Work

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

O God, Creative Spirit of life and love, we acknowledge with thankfulness the products of the resources and skills with which Thou hast so bountifully endowed us in this land.

We pray that we may use them increasingly to the greater benefit of all Thy children everywhere.

We thank thee for those who have responded to the call of Thy love and the Gospel of Thy Son Christ, our Lord, that they may give themselves to the service of their fellowmen.

Endue them with wisdom, patience and courage to strengthen the weak and relieve the needy, to teach the children and inspire the young people, to raise up those who fall and to enlist many in the fellowship of Thy church.

Bless this vehicle and direct the uses to which it is put. Guide, protect and prosper those who work in it and with it. Provide for them many supporters, that through all, Thy good purposes of love for Thy children may be carried out, to Thy honor and glory and the eternal salvation of many souls.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, who Himself used tools and the products of human craftsmanship, to preach the Gospel to those for whom He lived and died, and ever lives to make intercession for all who draw near to God through Him. Amen.

—A. Ronald Merrix

"For the Smallest Church"

• "How can beauty be brought to the small church, where the budget may be no more than $600-$800 a year?" This is the question answered with text and photos in the October *Advance,* New York.

For example, the crossroads church at Brighton, Ohio, with eighty-seven members, has been made beautiful at little expense. The small church at Veradale, Washington, "departed from conventional patterns to create something which is both original and pleasing."

University of Kentucky Study of Churches

• Harold F. Kaufman writes Bulletin 524, "Religious Organization in Kentucky," published by the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Kentucky, Lexington. Among the conclusions are the following:

The churches of Kentucky, measured by number of members, form the most important type of voluntary organization in the state. Since the days of settlement the proportion of the population who are church members has increased until in 1946 approximately half of all persons could be so classified. In that year the approximately 7,600 churches in the state had nearly 1,400,000 members, 3,500 or more full-time ministers, and contributions probably in excess of 20 million dollars. Although there are over 80 different religious bodies, five of them account for five-sixths of the members. Enrollment in the 6,000 or more Sunday Schools in the state is equal to two-thirds of the membership in the Protestant churches.

In comparison with the nation, Kentucky has about the same percentage of church members, churches are smaller, and there are more churches in proportion to population; also the church is strong in relation to other organized groups. Historically, the state has national significance in religious circles because of the great frontier revivals and the origin of the Disciples of Christ (the largest religious body originating in America) within its borders.

Regional differences within Kentucky with respect to church organization are much greater than the differences between the state and the nation as a whole. The percentage of the population who are church members is only one-third to one-half as large in the mountainous area of eastern Kentucky as in the remainder of the state. Increases in the proportion of church members also have been much greater in the central and western than in the eastern part of the state. Those subregions of the state in which organized religion has shown its greatest strength and growth (as indicated by church membership) have the more stable populations, higher economic and educational levels, and more formal organization.

An analysis of the social characteristics of a sample population of over 2,800 persons revealed that the church members had higher educational and economic status than nonmembers or than the church membership as a whole. In addition church leaders and other members were much more likely to participate in other organizations in the community than were nonmembers. This may indicate, however, the potential rather than actual influence of the church in the community, depending on the import that religious teachings have for community living.

A Modern Parable

• A certain town fell among modern problems which stripped it of its dignity and left it wounded, half dead.

Now it happened that a certain priest was asked to serve the town, but when he came and saw its problems, he passed by on the other side; for he knew they were too hot for comfort. And likewise another minister, when he was asked to serve the town, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain other minister, when at length he was asked, came to the town, and when he saw its problems he had compassion on it. And he stayed in the town and grappled with the problems—racial intolerance, divorce, juvenile delinquency, lack of recreational facilities, unemployment, alcohol, gambling. He bound up its wounds, and with patience and understanding helped deliver it of its oppressors.

And on the morrow when he departed from the town, he took aside its leaders, and said unto them: "Take care of this town, and whatsoever you spend on its improvement will return to you many fold."

—E. H. Babbitt, Reprinted from the *Baptist Town and Country Fellowship Bulletin*

Melbourne Village

"A planned community for pro-ctive homes and creative living" that of Melbourne Village, Mel-urne, Florida.

Melbourne Village is an "inten-nal community"—the realization a carefully worked out plan ough which its residents have ison to believe the "American way life" can find its best expression. provides a sane balance between luntary cooperation and individ-l independence together with that curity which can be enjoyed by milies firmly established on their n soil and under their own roofs. ere, in the spirit of genuine neigh-rliness, true democracy as it was acticed in the old town meeting lls of colonial days can come to e again. And people are able to t away from the high pressure ex-ence of our big cities and find alth and peace in living close to e good earth. All of this makes ssible emphasis on "creative liv-g" rather than on "competition." it too much to hope that in such atmosphere high Christian ethics ay prevail?

Rather unusual progress has been ade since ground was broken a tle over a year ago. Several fine mes have now been constructed d a number more are being start-l. Good roads and adequate drain-e are now established. Electric wer lines serve most of the com-unity and are being extended. elephone service is promised in the ar future. Gardens and fruit trees e on the increase.

In many of the homes gardening ill be a major interest, and the pportunities along these lines are nusual. When one combines an quable semi-tropical climate, fer-le soil, 100% water control, unlim-ed supplies of organic material for mposting, and experienced ad-isers, with the voluntary coopera-on of gardening enthusiasts, the re-lt is bound to be worthwhile. And hen one adds available air delivery northern markets, good cash in-mes also enter the picture.

Florida, already famous for its nshine and healthy out-of-door living, offers the maximum of health benefits in this particular section. In addition to the unusual combination of health factors provided by nature, the presence of health experts will greatly enhance the benefits to those coming in with health problems—or just with a yen for super-health.

The founders approach the important question of finances with the sincere belief that nowhere in this country can money be spent to better advantage in establishing a productive home. They are not primarily selling real estate, but rather memberships in this community. With each membership goes a clear title to the Village lot of one's choice, but the membership itself secures the benefit of generous discounts arranged with local dealers for the benefit of Villagers. These discounts, plus the help and advice of the experienced Village manager could easily offset the entire cost of the membership. Membership in the Village also includes a vote in all annual and other membership meetings, residence in a beautifully laid out community which, in the interest of each member, is carefully restricted—though this does not mean that expensive homes are required. It also secures a share in the ownership of all community property, and access to the park areas and such facilities as community buildings, playgrounds, tennis courts and swimming pool as these are developed.

There is a prospectus which gives fairly complete information about this community including its history; its present members (about fifty families at present); information about the construction of homes —artesian wells, sewage disposal, the clearing of land (a very simple matter in most cases)—the favorable tax situation including the $5000 homestead exemption; cultural and educational advantages both in Melbourne Village and Melbourne proper; what the sportsman may expect along the lines of both fresh and salt water fishing, swimming and boating, hunting, golfing, etc.; opportunities for making a cash income; a map of the professionally planned community layout; future accomodations for single men and women who do not want to establish homes, and transient quarters especially for those who are building their own homes. Address Melbourne Village, Melbourne, Florida.

A Swedish Film Available

• The first importation for church showings in this country of a theatrical motion picture produced abroad was announced this month by the Rev. William L. Rogers, executive director of The Religious Film Association, New York, the interdenominational agency. The film, "I Am With You," was produced on location in Africa under the auspices of the Church of Sweden and Studio Films, the leading motion picture studio in Sweden.

The picture was filmed in Southern Rhodesia in the authentic surroundings of a mission station maintained by the Church of Sweden at a village named Mneme. Although the story is set against a mission background, the plot deals with the universal problem of maintaining faith in the face of adversity.

Parson and Wife in Deep Water

• The "pastoral parson" of the *Rural New Yorker,* Dr. A. A. Burkhardt, tells about attending a meeting in Nyack, N. Y., the purpose of which was to unite two churches.

He had agreed to meet his wife at a diner in the town. While they were in the diner the rains came and the street was flooded.

The pastoral parson had another engagement which he felt he must keep. "That is the reason why he and Mrs. Parson were finally seen walking down the main street, a bit sheepishly, with their footwear in their hands.

"Just when they were beginning to think that no one they knew had seen them, a voice from the crowd of bystanders expressed the hope that they might read about this in the *Rural New Yorker.*" They did.

Dairyland Convention

• The Catholic Rural Life Conference called its 1948 convention at La Crosse, Wis., the "Dairyland Convention." In that country, they dared to debate the question of eliminating the federal taxes on colored oleomargarine. A great deal of attention was paid to aid to be given to displaced persons who will soon be arriving in rural communities.

The Roman Catholics again called for the development of the family-type farm as the primary objective of a national rural policy. Rural culture was praised by many speakers. A rural pageant was given. Prizes were awarded for essays on "the importance of soil conservation."

The following telegram was received by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ligutti, the executive secretary of the Conference:

"On behalf of the Committee on Town and Country, representing rural church workers in many Protestant denominations, I am pleased to send to your Convention our friendly greetings. We recall with satisfaction the many contacts we have had with you and your colleagues. We look forward to increased cooperation."—Benson Y. Landis.

Christ for the Changing Countryside

• Rev. E. W. Mueller, of the National Lutheran Council, Chicago, has prepared a report giving statistics on the Lutheran Church in Iowa, with data on the thirteen states where eighty per cent of the American Lutherans live. In all the states Lutherans are concentrated in certain areas.

In southern Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, the church has felt the effects of poor land and poor stewardship of the land. "If we want to serve adequately areas which have been neglected by all churches, it would seem to us that the approach should be made from the angle, what can our church do for the communities in these areas? . . . The church must have an intense desire to serve people."

Beautiful Rural Church

• This is the First Presbyterian Church of Glidden, Iowa, located in a small town of 900 inhabitants. The church is distinctly rural having 55 families in the country and 50 families in town, most of whom own land from which they obtain a living. The people are cultured and well educated. This is known as solid church territory and nearly all families attend church.

Our major project this year is the complete rebuilding of the first floor. We estimated the cost to be about $10,000. This amount has been oversubscribed and nearly 80% paid in cash.

The rebuilding includes putting new footings under the brick structure and a lowering of the entire floor by nearly twenty inches. The work of excavating was done early this year and forty men gave free labor amounting to over $2,000. During each afternoon for nearly three weeks the ladies of the church furnished hot lunches.

We are carrying the auditorium floor with heavy steel beams. The heating system features hot air ducts under the basement floor which will warm the floor in winter and serve as an air-conditioner in summer.

One of the ladies donated enough money to furnish a kitchen in the most modern manner with electric stoves, refrigerators, built-in cupboards, etc.

The dining and auditorium room will seat 225 people and will be equipped with a large stage with dressing rooms on either side. A Sunday School class already has the money to buy the heavy hangings for the stage. There will be room for several shuffle board courts and adequate facilities for motion pictures. We are to have adequate class room space for the young people, and there will be sufficient electrical outlets for any and every purpose.

The big surprise came last week when a new electric range, a new electric hot water heater and a new electric refrigerator arrived at the manse and were installed at no expense to the pastor and his wife.

Just a few weeks ago a very kind lady spoke about placing a memorial for her husband and when the pastor mentioned new chancel furniture she immediately became interested. There is on order a beautifully carved reredos, a new altar, a new lectern and a new pulpit and chairs to match.

When this is installed in our church auditorium with its lovely art windows in Romanesque architecture, we will have one of the most beautiful and best equipped rural churches to be found anywhere.

Some time this autumn we will dedicate our chancel furniture and also dedicate our new parish hall with all bills paid.

We are considering an expansion program whereby we will interest non-church going rural people from a distance of ten to twelve miles.

Last year a men's club was organized with sixty members and we expect to reach one hundred by the end of this. Thus far we have received fifty-three new members into the church fellowship and others are ready to unite with us.

You may hear more about this parish. I am trying to create a spirit of rural solidarity and I find an excellent response. Our young people are locating in this area and want the church to become the center of their activities. It is a pleasure to work with people such as these.

—C. Harrison Becker

In-Service Training

• An early issue of Town and Country Church will contain a list of schools and institutes to be held in 1949 for the ministers in town and country churches. The list will contain only the names of schools that are open to members of more than one denomination, and are cooperatively planned.

This note is an appeal to those who have charge of such a program to write at once to the Rev. Don F. Pielstick, Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., giving the following information: name of school or institute, inclusive dates of school session, and the name of the person to whom inquiries should be addressed.